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SUBJECT: ITURI'S DISARMAMENT PLAN LAUNCHED BUT MILITIAS
RELUCTANT TO PARTICIPATE

1. (SBU) Summary. The UN and the GDRC launched Ituri's disarmament plan September 1st. Very few people have visited the transit sites since they opened, however, and only a handful of those have turned in their weapons. Militia leaders such as Jerome Kakawave are demanding full integration of their forces into the Congolese army instead of disarmament. MONUC is facilitating discussions between the government and the militias to find a compromise involving integration of top officers in exchange for militia participation in the disarmament plan. End Summary.

Ituri's Disarmament: The Plan

2. (U) The UN and the GDRC launched Ituri's Disarmament and Community Reinsertion Plan (DCR) September 1st. Under the DCR plan, combatants from Ituri armed groups will need to gather into five transit sites for disarmament, registration, and selection for either reintegration into the community or future participation in a national army. The armed groups that have agreed to participate and their assigned transit sites are as follow:

- Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC), Iga Barriere/Nizi
- Front for National Integration (FNI), Kpwandroma
- People's Armed Forces of Congo (FAPC) and the Popular Force for Democracy in Congo (FPDC), Mahagi
- Patriotic Force of Resistance in Ituri (FRPI), Aveba
- Party for Unity and Safeguarding of the Integrity of Congo (PUSIC), Kasenyi

3. (U) MONUC will provide security at the transit sites and an integrated unit of the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) will disarm the combatants. A UNDP volunteer will coordinate humanitarian activities, while an NGO will be responsible for managing the transit site. Upon entering the camp, each combatant will receive civilian clothes, food, a blanket, utensils and hygiene items. When departing, former combatants will be given a month's worth of food, a domestic kit with household items, a production kit with mostly agricultural items and a \$50 transportation allowance to get home.

Reality on the Ground: Militias Reluctant to Participate

4. (SBU) According to MONUC sources, militias, especially that led by Jerome Kakawave, have been reluctant to participate in plan DCR. Jerome and other militia leaders have recently begun claiming that the GDRC promised them full integration of their militias into the army and therefore no disarmament will take place unless this promise is honored. MONUC notes that the engagement act signed between the GDRC and the militia leaders on May 14, 2004 did not include such a promise. In order to enlist Jerome's group as well as ensure the participation of other armed groups, however, MONUC is now facilitating talks between the GDRC and the militias to incorporate some of their officers in the Congolese army.

5. (SBU) A Bunia NGO source told poloff September 25 that people in Ituri are skeptical about the DCR plan. He said that only a handful of people have gone to the disarmament centers since they opened in early September, and that most of them had not brought any of their weapons with them. PUSIC's Chief Khawa Mandro told a Bunia NGO recently that MONUC had nothing to offer them at this point through this disarmament plan. (Comment: The Hemas from the Lake Albert region who constitute PUSIC have long been distrustful of the Lendu/Ngiti militias and are unlikely to disarm unless they are convinced that these militias will disarm at the same time. End Comment.)

6. (SBU) MONUC points to the September 19th attack by Ngiti militias against Bira civilians in the village of Lembo (10 kms South of Bunia) as evidence of the strong need for disarmament in Ituri. During this ethnically motivated attack, 300-400 Ngiti militias killed approximately 16 people and burned many Bira homes. MONUC characterized this attack as an act of revenge based on local factors unrelated to other groups in Ituri. Following this incident, Petronille Vaweka, Ituri's District Commissioner, helped mediate a dialogue between leaders of both communities. According to her, they agreed not to engage in further confrontations and

to solve future problems peacefully.

Comment

17. (SBU) The Ituri militias' commitment to disarmament has long been questionable. Despite the Engagement Act they signed in Kinshasa, they now argue the GDRC promised full integration of their members into the Congolese army. Such a promise is not contained in the accord they signed and it is unlikely that the GDRC would have orally agreed to full integration of the estimated 15,000 militia members in Ituri. Current negotiations between the GDRC and the militias could lead to the integration of some of the top militia officers into FARDC. It is unlikely this will be enough to persuade them to participate in the DCR plan.

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